UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/49/378
12 September 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-ninth session
Items 91 and 100 of the provisional agenda*

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolutions 44/77 of 8 December 1989 and 44/171 of 19 December 1989, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit the final version of the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development to the Assembly in 1994. In accordance with Commission on the Status of Women resolution 36/8 of 20 March 1992, the World Survey will be one of the principal documents for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace. In accordance with Assembly resolution 48/108 of 20 December 1993, a preliminary executive summary of the World Survey was provided to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994 (E/1994/86), through the Commission on the Status of Women.

2. This is the third of the quinquennial World Surveys to have been prepared. The first, a draft of which was available to the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the Decade for Women at Nairobi in 1985, was issued in 1986. 1/ The second was issued in 1989. 2/ The Surveys are now timed to be issued in the year previous to the five-yearly review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Each Survey has had a particular point of departure. The first explored the contribution of women to the economy so as to demonstrate that women were key participants in economic development. The second started to explore the relationship between the participation of women and the global adjustment process that was under way. The third Survey examines what has happened as a result of the restructuring process and the emergence of women as decisive elements in the global economy.

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It is intended, by examining the most recent information available, to project trends of how men and women, in playing their ascribed roles in society, affect and are affected by the global economy.

3. The first World Survey was one of the few studies examining the role of women in the economy. Since then, the question of women and development has started to be incorporated into many mainstream surveys of the global economy, and the situation of women in the recent past has been accurately described in these studies. The third Survey, therefore, concentrates on identifying trends and considering how a gender perspective might change the way development concepts are expressed.

4. Many specialized agencies have contributed sections to the text, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); other organizations provided inputs to these. A first draft was circulated to the organizations of the United Nations system.

5. The full text of the Survey, including tables, reaches some 250 pages and will be available to the Fourth World Conference on Women. It will be submitted through the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-ninth session, acting as the preparatory committee for the Conference, and will constitute one of the factual bases for the Platform of Action to be adopted at the Conference.

6. In view of these considerations, and given the documentation constraints confronting the General Assembly, the Secretary-General is presenting only the executive summary of the document to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session. The Secretary-General recommends that the Assembly consider the summary at its current session and return to the full version at its fiftieth session under an agenda item entitled "Effective mobilization of women in development", taking into account also at that time the results of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7. Since the last Survey in 1989, the world has experienced a fundamental change in its economic relations, in which women were a major factor. The 1980s ended with a slow-down in economic growth in developed and developing countries, and the 1990s have started with a recession followed by a slow and cautious recovery. Progress in developed and developing countries has been uneven. Many developing countries have encountered significant difficulties in implementing structural adjustment programmes. The relative positions of countries in the developing and the developed worlds have changed, and new growth poles have emerged. Markets have become further integrated through trade and global investment, and interdependence among economies has increased. This trend has been further reinforced by the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which sought to keep the world trade system open and promised its further liberalization.

8. These changes took place in a context where there has been a renewed emphasis on democratization and good governance, as well as on the use of the market to direct economic development. Perceptions of the meaning, causes and conditions of development have been greatly modified. Development discourse now emphasizes sustainability and the human dimension.

9. The world economy has changed and, in certain measure, it is women who have made many of the positive changes possible. Economic development and growth appears to be intricately related to the advancement of women. Where women have advanced, economic growth has usually been steady; where women have not been allowed to be full participants, there has been stagnation. The Survey is about this process, what it means and how it can be built upon for a more secure future for humankind. It looks at development through a gender lens: at poverty as a failure of development and how investing in the capacities of women represents a way out; at employment, where the participation of women is decisive in the transformation of the labour force; and at economic decision-making, where the absence of women at the top of large corporate bureaucracies and their growing presence in a dynamic middle sector affects development policies.

10. Despite its considerable significance for economic advancement and the sustainability of development, the change in the role of women in development has continued as a largely unnoticed evolutionary process. It is now possible to see many trends in this process clearly for the first time in the statistical series contained in the Women's Indicators and Statistics Data Base (WISTAT), in a growing corpus of micro-studies, and in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. To mark these trends, the 1994 World Survey employs what is now called gender analysis.

11. Gender analysis views women and men in terms of the roles they play in society, roles which can change as societies change. By comparing women and men, rather than looking at women as a group seen in isolation, gender analysis illuminates a key aspect of the structure of society and makes it easier to identify obstacles to its improvement. Central to the analysis is the distinction between productive and reproductive roles, referring to production of goods and services and to the social reproduction of society over generations, and their interrelationship. Both roles are valuable and both can be performed by women and men alike. In the past, social reproductive roles were largely assigned to women and productive roles largely to men. This is changing, but the tension between the two remains and is a recurrent theme of the 1994 World Survey.

12. Two types of changes have occurred over the past 10 years in what could be called the enabling environment for women in the economy. One is changes in the legal status of women in the direction of equality. The other is the longer-term effects of achieving equal access by women to education and training. Taken together, these changes have served to provide equal opportunities for an increasing proportion of women and have allowed them to participate fully in development, contributing with the particular skills and priorities that derive from their gender roles.

13. The gradual achievement of de jure equality for women is reflected in the increase in the number of States party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In most of these States, ratification or accession has required the elimination of legal restrictions that had impeded women from obtaining access to the factors of production: land, capital and technology. While progress in exercising these rights has been less rapid, especially where there is a gap between constitutional principle, enabling legislation and customary behaviour, in States that are party to the Convention, especially those that have not registered reservations, progress towards equality in economic participation is evident.

14. In most regions of the world, there has been notable progress towards equality between men and women in access to education at all levels. By 1990, most regions had achieved or were close to achieving equality in primary school enrolment, a marked change from 1970. Even more rapid progress can be observed in secondary and tertiary levels of education. There are regional differences however. In Africa and south Asia in particular, progress in eliminating the gap between girls and boys has been less rapid.

15. The rapid elimination of differences in access to education does not mean that the access problem has been solved. Although women are doing much better than before in terms of access to education and years of education attained, the situation remains problematic with regard to the content of curriculum materials, which are often gender biased, the social and organizational arrangements in schools, and the presence of women in decision-making positions in the school system at all levels. Girls are still channelled into typical female fields of study and career paths, especially with regard to the technological skills needed to meet the challenges of information and technological progress in order to enable women to continue to take on gainful employment. Adult illiteracy, a consequence of past inequality in access and which is far more prevalent among women than men, needs to be addressed as does the broader issue of training.

16. However, it can no longer be said for the women now entering the labour force for the first time that their educational backgrounds are inferior to those of men. The longer term consequences of this equality still needs to be seen, but its present-day effects are certain.

17. The impact of the economic reforms of the 1980s, while similar in terms of its direction, have had different consequences for men and women in terms of the distribution of the adjustment burden. Rapid technological innovation, accompanying changes in work organization, growing economic interdependence, and the globalization of markets and production affected the socio-economic position of women in a complex and multidimensional way, bringing them into the formal labour market in unprecedented numbers. This had both positive and negative aspects.

18. In developed countries, as a result of industrial restructuring in the context of persisting gender-related wage differentials, layoffs undertaken to achieve cost reduction were often geared towards higher paid workers. The workers and managers let go under these circumstances were more often men than women, since women were, on the whole, lower paid. General increases in living

costs associated with recession meant that in many countries women chose to enter the labour market in circumstances that were often precarious and without social support. This had the consequence of narrowing the remuneration gap between women and men.

19. The increase in labour force participation was not, however, a matter of women replacing men in their jobs. It was rather a consequence of structural change and greater willingness on the part of women to accept initially lower pay in the growth sectors. It is also true that women, whose traditional labour history had involved frequent moves in and out of the labour force in connection with maternity or the need to provide care to dependants and a willingness to work on a part-time basis or do outwork, were more acceptable to the new model of the flexible firm. Moreover, a shift in the crucial service sector to businesses requiring highly skilled staff, coupled with the increase of qualified women and the relatively lower barriers to employment, have helped bring women into better paid jobs.

20. There is increasing evidence of a relationship between the advancement of women and economic performance. The very nature of restructuring policies has led to an increase in women in the labour force, initially as part of a lower paid labour force in labour-intensive industry. Subsequently, progress in the liberalization of markets has reinforced this participation and is beginning to reflect itself in a move of female labour into higher paid, more skilled sectors.

21. In the economies in transition, the short-run situation has been almost the opposite. Women had already achieved equality in labour force participation, but the economic restructuring of State-owned enterprises, in which a large share of the economically active female population was employed, has led to high unemployment among women. Women appear to be at a greater disadvantage than men in the context of transition. Evidence suggests that in the sectors most affected by reform, women are laid off first. When unemployed, women face greater difficulties than men in obtaining alternative employment. Privatization favoured those in the previous system who had access to capital, information and markets. In the former system these had been predominately men, and this has carried over to the new economies. The initial evidence suggests that men are predominately being employed in the new industries. However, it is not clear that these trends will persist, given the qualifications possessed by women, particularly in new growth areas after economic stabilization has been achieved.

22. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the new private sector firms are unable or unwilling to maintain the social support services that were part of employment under the former system, making it difficult for women to participate in economic activity on the same basis as before.

23. In developing countries, the effects of global restructuring varied by region. Structural adjustment inevitably began with stabilization policies that were intended to set the stage for the resumption of growth by reducing inflation rates and achieving a sustainable balance-of-payments position. This inevitably meant an increase in living costs as subsidies were removed and prices for staple goods rose to market levels, and as government expenditure

cuts were often accompanied by service charges for health care and education. It was women who bore the first brunt of coping with these changes within the household. Subsequently, women who previously had not been in the formal economically active population became economically active. At the same time, farmers who bought more food than they produced, small producers and public and urban informal sector workers, categories in which a relatively high proportion are women, have been among the hardest hit.

24. The changes in employment patterns that occurred in the context of economic restructuring affected women in particular ways. In the process of intra- and intersectoral employment shifts, women in large numbers accepted lower paid jobs with little security. However, it was often the case that women were employed while their spouses were not. If there had to be a choice between "low pay" or "no pay", women accepted low pay, while their spouses often chose no pay rather than accepting lower remuneration. However, jobs for men were often simply not available. As a consequence, women were often more able than men to obtain jobs in growth sectors.

25. This has been particularly the case in the economies promoting export-oriented trade regimes based on labour-intensive manufacturing and international cost reduction. In the export-oriented sectors, women have often been the preferred employees.

26. In Asia, where growth has been based on outward-oriented development strategies, women constituted the larger share of those employed in the export-oriented industries. Similar trends are being observed in Latin America and the Caribbean as economies in that region take steps towards greater economic liberalization. In contrast, production of tradeable goods largely based on primary commodities in Africa has tended to work against women, who predominate in the production of non-tradeable food crops.

27. The short-run effects of structural adjustment have been more difficult for women than for men. While it is difficult to evaluate the longer-term effects, it would seem that the major gender factor has been the inability of women to benefit from changes in the incentive structures that were due to the pre-existing, sex-related barriers to reallocation of labour. To the extent that this is addressed in current policies, some of the negative consequences may be mitigated. Similarly, where privatization benefits micro- and small-scale enterprises, into which women are moving rapidly, the adjustment process can have longer-term benefits for women. Market deregulation, which in effect allows firms to have high wage flexibility, has particularly benefited women in the short-run, because female employment has increased. This will be a long-term benefit, however, if women are able to obtain equal pay with men and upgrade their skills so as to move into high-productivity sectors.

28. Changes in world trade patterns have, as noted, led to increased female industrial employment in those countries where growth of exports has been particularly strong. In this sense, increases in trade from developed to developing countries has been, to some extent, determined by women workers. Whether this will translate into long-term benefits will also depend on whether women will be given the opportunities to refine their skills, since labour force quality is a major component in international competition. The growth in the

importance of transnational corporations is also significant, since they have a clear preference for employment of women in export processing zones. It may also be positive to the extent that they implement in their subsidiaries the equal opportunity policies mandated in their headquarters countries. There is little evidence about whether any shift in international financial flows will improve the economic status of women, although should new investment reach firms owned by or employing women, this would be positive.

29. The Survey has explored, using the new data available from WISTAT, the relationship between economic growth and the participation of women in the labour force. The analysis shows that women benefit from economic growth, sometimes to a greater extent than men, but not everywhere and not always. Regional differences in this context are very important. The most relative benefit has been in the countries of eastern and south-eastern Asia, where growth has been export-based. However, the comparative data suggest that, as the economy grows and the labour market becomes tighter, competitiveness in skills assumes a greater role than labour cost in terms of the allocation of employment opportunities between women and men. Unless women are able to upgrade their skills and catch up with the technological upgrading of the economy in developing countries, the opportunities for them to benefit from economic growth to a greater extent than men will disappear.

30. The relationship between the global economic environment, the enabling environment and the role of women in the economy can be seen in the analysis of three central themes of the Survey: poverty; productive employment; and women and economic decision-making.

Poverty

31. Poverty is universally considered to be unacceptable; it represents a major failure of development. Analysing its causes and solutions from a gender perspective can help illuminate the nature of development and help identify successful policies and programmes for both men and women.

32. The extent to which an evident increase in poverty is a longer-term global trend is still a matter of debate, but there is no question that there are more poor than ever in the world, that poverty is increasing in some regions, or that women and men experience poverty differently. Despite a renewal in economic growth world wide, the number of people living in absolute poverty has increased in developing and developed regions alike.

33. A gender perspective looks at how and why women and men experience poverty differently and how they become poor through different processes. While poverty can be measured at different levels, ranging from the individual to the nation, a particularly appropriate level for gender analysis is the household, consisting of people living together in the same place for a common purpose. Households, with shared income and consumption, experience poverty and have to cope with it. In the household always, but especially where sharing is unequal, gender usually has significant consequences for well-being.

34. At the intra-household level, poverty is defined in terms of consumption. Poverty is the condition of deprivation; not having enough food, shelter and

other essentials to meet basic needs. Consumption within the household is less determined by the income brought in by a member than by cultural and social factors determining who can bring in income and how the goods available for consumption are shared, factors which often favour men.

35. One approach to understanding poverty from a gender perspective is based on the concepts of entitlements and endowments. An entitlement is a right to command resources. An endowment consists of the skills, access and other resources that make it possible to exercise an entitlement. In that sense, poverty is a failure to ensure entitlements because of inadequate endowments. In gender terms, this can be seen in terms of asymmetries between women and men in their entitlements and endowments. Taken together, these asymmetries reproduce the vicious cycle of poverty and explain why men and women experience it differently.

36. In the household, it can mean that women have fewer entitlements to household goods, coupled with additional responsibilities. They have less command over labour, whether their own or of others to help them undertake activities. The division of labour between women and men is unfavourable to women, who must work longer hours at largely unremunerated tasks. Similarly, women receive less return for their labour in income terms than men, although they are more likely to use their income for household purposes. Moreover, most women have fewer entitlements to officially distributed resources, whether in the form of land, extension services or credit, especially in rural areas. This, in turn, prevents women from building up their skills and resources.

37. The strongest direct link between gender and poverty is found in the situation of female-headed households, the existence of which is considered to be a significant indicator of female poverty. While female headship formally should mean that a woman is the person most financially responsible for the household, that definition is not always used in census counts, when an adult male is usually assumed to be the head. Thus, when the head of a household is counted to be a woman, this usually means that there is no adult male present and the woman is the only support. In developing regions, there are major differences, with the highest percentage found in sub-Saharan Africa, although globally the percentage of female-headed households is highest in Europe and North America, where they constitute the poorest segment of otherwise relatively wealthy societies. Female headship can be the result of migration, family dissolution, male mortality or unpartnered fertility.

38. What is characteristic of these female-headed households is a high dependency ratio, coupled with fewer adult income earners. Unlike households with two or more adult income earners, female-headed households place women in a situation of having to undertake both productive and reproductive activities, with an inevitable trade-off between the two. Female-headed households in general are poorer because of this, and the welfare of children in them has been found to be generally less good in terms of nutrition, health and education, although this varied by region.

39. Education can be clearly identified as a mitigating factor for poverty. There has been progress in reducing the gap between boys and girls, but the progress has been less rapid in some regions, such as Africa, and in rural areas

generally. For poor households generally, sending children to school can involve difficult choices, however positive the long-run results may be. However, a number of innovative programmes have demonstrated that illiteracy and low school attendance for girls can be addressed successfully. Similarly, training of women in economic sectors where their role is particularly important, such as agriculture, forestry and fishing, can lead to important economic returns. Education and training for members of refugee households, which are predominately female-headed, has also grown in importance.

40. Poverty is particularly acute in rural areas, and has particular consequences for women. A combination of factors, including cutbacks in services as part of restructuring, environmental degradation, consequences of past discrimination reflected in female illiteracy, male out-migration leading to female-headed households, all coupled with women's traditional limited access to factors of production combine to feminize rural poverty. Least developed countries are themselves predominately rural. Moreover, export-oriented growth in agriculture has directed resources towards export crops, which are usually controlled by men, rather than to food production, which is largely undertaken by women.

41. Much of what is known about gender aspects of rural poverty is derived from micro-studies; there is a general absence of data disaggregated by sex, a prerequisite for recognition of the role of women in agriculture. On the whole, the evidence suggests that economic activity of women in rural areas is increasing, but not their participation in decision-making.

42. Strengthened grass-roots organizations of women, especially at the community level, are becoming ever more important. These organizations have been found to be effective in increasing participation, but suffer from a lack of support and resources. National machinery for the advancement of women can help remedy this by encouraging increased participation by women. A variety of programmes to establish and strengthen these organizations can be envisaged in the context of democratization, including various types of information and promotional campaigns.

43. Rural poverty has to be addressed in terms of access to and control of productive resources. Access to land is of particular concern since, traditionally, land is passed from father to son and reform measures have tended to reinforce this pattern. Improvement of _de jure_ access to land by women is an important factor in the success of rural development policies. Similarly, removing obstacles to the access of women to paid labour can help address this gender asymmetry. Provision of access to modern technology can also help.

44. Improved access to credit can be a major means of addressing poverty by releasing the productive abilities of women. While many credit programmes do not take women into account, especially poor women, women have proven to be better credit risks on the whole than men, particularly when credit has been accompanied by extension, training and assistance in marketing. It requires identifying the particular needs of women, including the need to balance the multiple roles played by both women and men.

45. Provision of extension services to women has been problematic. Not only are most extension agents men, but the programmes themselves have been designed primarily for male-dominated activities. As a result, many of these programmes are no longer adapted to reality. Programmes designed with a gender approach are more likely to be effective; they require a combination of research, recruitment of women extension agents, and training of male extension workers to be gender-sensitive.

46. Addressing rural poverty also implies recognizing the importance of non-agricultural work in rural areas. Many non-farm occupations and enterprises are particularly suited to women, including small-scale enterprises in food and beverage processing, handicrafts and petty trading. Support for these also requires efforts to provide access to the factors of production, including especially, credit technological information and marketing.

47. Assured health services, including family planning, for rural women, who may be particularly at risk as a result of maternity, need to be part of any poverty eradication programme in rural areas. Many of these services have been reduced as a result of restructuring and, in other cases, there have been gender effects such as, for example, when the introduction of fees has led to a relatively lower level of immunization for girls than for boys.

48. Migration to urban areas has been one consequence of continued rural poverty. While in some countries this migration has been predominately male, in others women have migrated in greater proportion, particularly where economic growth is higher. There have been some reciprocal benefits from this migration: remittances of urban migrants can help alleviate rural poverty, and care for the children of migrants by relatives in the rural areas relieves some of the burden on urban dwellers.

49. Urban poverty itself is an increasingly important issue, not only because urban populations are growing dramatically in the developing world, but also because the nature of and solutions to urban poverty are different. Urban life is based on a cash economy, which sharpens the effects of poverty by making households more vulnerable to price changes. Public services are more critical to well-being in urban areas and when access to them is lacking, poverty can be particularly acute. For recent migrants, there is a need to learn to deal with a new environment. Highest rates of urban growth are expected in Africa and Asia. Urban populations are typically young, with high proportions under 15 years of age and consequent implications for providing health and education facilities.

50. There are gender dimensions to the organization of urban space and housing, particularly since women are more likely to work outside the home. The relative location of workplace and home is important in terms of the ability of women to balance productive and reproductive tasks that are not fully shared. Also important is the provision of infrastructure, especially potable water, since water provision, even in urban areas, tends to be a female responsibility.

51. Health in urban areas has gender dimensions in terms of the effects of environmental degradation and often violent living conditions, the spread of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and

other infectious diseases, and occupational health issues that are gender specific. The stresses of urban life can be more acute for women given their multiple tasks. Of particular concern is an increasing trend towards early pregnancies among urban adolescent girls, since their long-term consequences can include significant reduction in opportunities. Because of the complexity of the services that need to be provided, the delivery of urban health programmes to women should be seen in a holistic manner.

52. In dealing with poverty, whether urban or rural, there are different roles for different actors in the process. Although there has been a tendency to de-emphasize the role of the State in the economy through privatization and other measures, the State still plays a critical role. Its function is to raise, allocate and reorganize public resources for the good of society as a whole and to create the legal and normative enabling environment for development. How the role is played depends on the priorities set by the State, which, in many countries, has not included the type of public investment and incentives that might address poverty. The State, however, can provide the normative basis for change, as reflected in laws and programmes, can increase the access of women to productive resources and can act to help provide equal opportunities. This can be reinforced by community and other non-governmental organizations.

53. Women have considerably less influence than men on the priorities set for public action. The market, in contrast, responds to a multiplicity of individual choices, where influence is a function of resources. Women have less influence in the market because they do not have the same control over their labour as men and they face structural limitations on access to other means of production.

54. The conclusion is to use public action, by the State and by organizations, to extend the entitlements of the poor and increase their endowments so that they can be empowered to improve their own situations. As the less empowered of the poor, when entitlements are extended to women the effect in terms of poverty eradication is particularly great. This requires of women to take advantage of their rights and responsibilities as citizens to make use of the State.

Productive employment

55. One of the greatest economic changes over the past decade has been the rapid influx of women into the paid labour force and the emerging general patterns of employment, which are more like those typical for women than for men. Productive employment by women is also a critical factor in the eradication of poverty, both at the household level and for national economies. The employment of women relative to men is increasing, as are their qualifications, but it is underpaid, poorly regulated and has a short-term perspective.

56. Globally, over one third of all women aged 15 years and older are in the formal labour force, although there are conspicuous regional differences. Female economic activity has increased over the past two decades in almost all regions, and if under-reported activity in the informal sector were to be counted the proportion would be even higher. The greatest growth in employment

is in manufacturing and services. There has also been growth in the proportion of women in the category of technical and professional workers. However, although there has been an upward trend in the proportion of women in managerial and administrative categories, few women have reached the top ranks of corporate management.

57. Information on the exact extent of the economic participation of women is still uneven, partly because of the way participation is defined and partly because of under-counting of unpaid work and work in the informal sector. It is therefore likely that the economic participation of women is much higher than official statistics show.

58. The entry of women into the labour force is a function of both economic necessity and a desire to exercise their right to work. It has been abetted by a trend towards more flexible working patterns and practices in response to competitive pressures. This has resulted in "atypical" or "non-standard" modes of work, such as part-time and temporary work, outwork and homework, which have been more accepted by women in the light of their family responsibilities. To some extent, this reflected a proliferation of low-income jobs and a decline of higher paid employment which had been the domain of men. Consequently, a notable rise in female employment was accompanied by a decline in male employment and a shift for men towards part-time and other atypical forms of employment. However, women continue, on average, to earn less than men, a situation that is only partially attributable to job differences.

59. Evidence, particularly from the economies in transition, suggests that the entry of women into the labour force is now a permanent feature and that, rather than considering themselves as a reserve labour force, they want to remain at work because of preference. This has made the transition to market economies in those countries particularly difficult for women, who have experienced relatively higher rates of unemployment than men. In the Asia and Pacific region, women have provided the bulk of growth in the labour force in countries with export-oriented industrialization.

60. Technological change is a major factor in the employment of women. In the past, women workers tended to be displaced when cheap labour was replaced by technology. Whether this will continue in the future is an unanswered question. In manufacturing when the purpose of technology is to replace labour-intensive work, female industrial workers can be the group most affected. However, when productivity improvements are the motive, women are frequently beneficiaries. Given skill upgrading, introduction of technology can have positive effects on women by making a qualitative change in the nature of the work. Some information technologies have the effect, as a result of globalization, of creating employment in developing countries through such clerical tasks as remote data-entry. It can also lead to atypical patterns of employment, including homework, and divide the labour force between a highly skilled, stable, core staff and peripheral workers who can be taken on or let go quickly. The group into which women will fall will depend on whether they are able to acquire the requisite skills.

61. The introduction of new technologies to agriculture, likewise, can have either positive or negative effects. The immediate effect of the introduction

of high-yielding varieties of grain, for example, especially in Asia, was to generate employment for women, because tasks like sowing seeds, weeding and harvesting had been traditionally performed by women. Over the longer term, the introduction of other technologies has tended to replace women's labour. Some evidence suggests that the development of appropriate technology for tasks now performed by women is a means to their empowerment.

62. A new global study of women in the manufacturing sector by UNIDO, summarized in the Survey, demonstrates that the participation rate of women in that sector has increased faster than that of men. It suggests, however, that there are many patterns and identifiable groups of countries fitting them. Moreover, women are concentrated in the lower end of the spectrum; few are involved in administrative and management functions. In countries having export-oriented industries there appears to be a preference for hiring women workers, at least partly because of their lower cost or willingness to work on a subcontracting or outwork basis. When there is stagnation in the large enterprises in the modern sector, new job opportunities are often found in labour-intensive micro- or small-scale industries.

63. Female employment in manufacturing, as is the case with employment generally, is also conditioned by the socio-cultural norms about their public participation and whether their employment is given the same value as that of men.

64. In each of 12 country groups identified, ranging from industrialized countries with a high concentration of women in the tertiary sector through least developed countries with a traditional socio-economic role for women, there are specific challenges and policies to meet them.

65. One consequence of massive unemployment and underemployment in many developing countries has been an increasing internal and international migration of women to obtain employment. For sending countries, the remittances of women workers can be significant. For receiving countries, the migrant workers provide labour in areas where national supply is inadequate. The conditions under which migration occurs are not always favourable to women, and strategies, such as training and orientation to national conditions, have been identified to improve the situation of female migrants.

66. The increase in the rates of economic activity of women has often been accompanied by a decrease in the quality of working conditions. Some of the factors involved in the qualitative issues are outlined below. One is whether work takes place in the public, the formal private or the informal sector. Work in the public sector, with generally non-discriminatory rules, provides better protection for employees. This sector has been shrinking as a result of restructuring. Work in developing countries is typically in agriculture or the informal sector, where conditions are unregulated and often precarious.

67. In industrialized countries, much of the growth in the participation of women in the labour force has been accounted for by part-time work. As noted, this atypical type of employment is becoming common in developing countries as well. The issue is how to provide social protection, career development and employment security to these part-time workers.

68. There is also continued evidence of occupational segregation, leading to lower pay and limited occupational mobility. This, however, is partly offset by the growing economic importance of some of the fields in which women have traditionally been represented. There is, even here, evidence of wage differentials that cannot be explained solely by occupation, regardless of sector.

69. While there has been an increase in the understanding that social protection needs to be accorded to workers, particularly in terms of services such as child care that enable women and men to reconcile their productive and reproductive roles, this has been affected by problems of global restructuring, which reduced the likelihood that these facilities would be provided either by the State or by the enterprises and reduced the incentives for men to share in this role.

70. There has been an increase in women members in trade unions, but this lags behind women's numbers in the labour force and women are not well represented in trade union leadership or in associations of employers. Organizing in associations and unions has been found to strengthen the bargaining power of women and protect their interests where it occurs.

Women and economic decision-making

71. The increase in the importance of women in the formal economy, the recognition of their role in eradicating poverty, and the changes that have already occurred in women's access to education and other human resources development assets, have not yet been reflected in their participation in economic decision-making. It is clear that these changes in the underlying structure of the economy will not automatically lead to changes in decision-making processes or structures.

72. Economic decision makers include persons occupying a wide variety of positions whose decisions can determine the direction of economic policy in both long-term and immediate ways. They include top executives of national public bodies dealing with economic matters; senior managers of public and private enterprises at the national and international levels; entrepreneurs at various levels; senior managers of international and regional financial institutions; and members of the boards of trade unions and professional and business organizations.

73. While data exist on women in management occupations, there are no regular global statistics on the proportion of women among economic decision makers. There are many reasons why there should be more women in top decision-making positions, ranging from women's equal rights to such positions, the growing proportion of women in the labour force, the increasing proportion of women among persons in technical, professional, administrative and management occupations, and the advantage to the economy from drawing on the skills and abilities of women, derived from their experience.

74. In terms of the general category of managers, women hold between 10 and 30 per cent of what ILO classifies as management positions, but there are less than 5 per cent in top management. In the 1,000 largest non-United States of

America corporations, only 1 per cent of top management positions are filled by women, and in the 1,000 largest United States corporations the figure is only 8 per cent, mostly in second-level top management. These corporations comprise the bulk of transnational business. A similar situation is found in the boards of trade unions and the boards of professional and employers' organizations.

75. In government, where only 6 per cent of ministerial positions in 1993 were held by women, women held an even lower proportion of top posts dealing with the economy. While there was a larger percentage of women in sub-ministerial level decision-making posts, again the proportion was lower in those dealing with the economy. The situation is no different for international economic decision-making. Neither the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions nor the regional development banks have many women in decision-making positions, either in government delegations or in the secretariats themselves.

76. Changes in the composition of third-level students of law, business, science and technology, where women are achieving parity in most regions, should mean that the pool from which the next generation of economic decision makers is drawn will contain as many women as men.

77. Overall, there is a very slow rate of increase in the proportion of women in top decision-making, regardless of the level of development of the country. This contrasts with the growth in the number of women employed and the significant increase of women among entrepreneurs. This, coupled with the increase in young women with appropriate training, could lead to an increase in women in economic decision-making at a far faster rate than heretofore, if structural obstacles that are gender-based can be surmounted.

78. One basic obstacle is the lack of assured, upward career paths for women in corporate structures, whether public or private, starting with recruitment and extending through career development. Recruitment of women to corporate careers has been slow, in part because women were considered less desirable in them owing to their presumed reproductive role and the fact that many women chose education in fields that did not lead to recruitment for economic management.

79. Once recruited, women have had to deal with corporate cultures that, consciously or not, are male-oriented. Ranging from work-hour norms, through networks, through achievement criteria based on perceptions and stereotyped expectations, reinforced by administrative procedures, these corporate cultures have tended to create obstacles to the promotion of women. Taken together, the factors form a "glass ceiling", an invisible but impassable barrier that prevents women from rising professionally upward, regardless of their education and experience. Even if women manage to reach higher levels of management, their minority status can produce unnecessary stresses that make mobility both difficult and, occasionally, undesired.

80. Many women, rather than seeking careers in larger corporations, are choosing to become entrepreneurs, owning or running small and medium-sized modern enterprises. While the statistics on the number of entrepreneurs are not always comparable, over time statistics have shown that the gap between women and men in the category has been diminishing over the past 20 years. The

enterprises created are different from those owned by men, and centre on delivery of modern services and other growth sectors.

81. This development has been facilitated by the increase in educational access and the growth in sectors where women's gender-derived skills in communication, multi-tasking and non-hierarchical decision-making are particularly important. At the same time, these enterprises face special obstacles in terms of obtaining financial resources, access to management training and technical assistance, building networks and not having social support facilities.

82. Many of these factors come together in terms of trade development, as women seek to take advantage of trade-driven growth. Women entrepreneurship finds expression at all levels of trade, but must work against the variety of constraints already noted. A number of steps are being taken to create an enabling environment that will permit women to compete fully in trade development. The Women in Trade Development programme of ITC involves a series of interventions defined to help create that environment.

Promoting the effective participation of women in development

83. The current role of women in development is the result of trends unleashed by changes in the enabling environment coupled with the nature of global economic change. Market forces and the policy choices underlying them have propelled women into a decisive position in much of the global and national economy. However, the changes have not been fast enough, are not sufficiently secure and are not occurring everywhere. To equalize and accelerate the process, policies should be adopted by Governments, by enterprises and by women themselves to address the main obstacles.

84. It is increasingly clear that gender should be taken into account in global and national policy-making. Developments over the past decade, especially global economic restructuring, have proven that economic change is not gender neutral. Yet there is little evidence that economic policy makers have considered gender as a key variable in their policy-making. Gender could be taken into account by such means as:

(a) Examining the gender-related employment effects of policies such as export promotion or technological change;

(b) Ensuring that the transition to a flexible market does not merely lead to low wages as a proxy for productivity, but rather develops the skills of workers to provide a transition to industries built on skilled workforces with productivity based on output;

(c) Taking into account when defining economic policies the types of employment that both men and women will be able to undertake, giving appropriate value to sharing of reproductive roles between women and men.

85. In that poverty reflects a failure of development, it leads to a cycle that undermines future development and has significant gender dimensions. It is obvious that these gender dimensions should be addressed. A major dimension of poverty is that men and women experience poverty differently at the level of the

household and, therefore, by aggregation in the economy as a whole. It follows that women constitute the most significant entry-point for poverty-alleviation strategies; women are less the problem of poverty than the basis for its solution. Not having benefited in the past from opportunities that would have built up their endowments because programmes were directed primarily towards men, yet charged in reality with the responsibility for coping with lack of consumption, women have been denied the necessary entitlements to lift themselves and their families from poverty. This could be addressed by a range of actions which will increase women's endowments and entitlements. Actions might include:

(a) Ensuring equal access to education by girls, especially from poor families and in rural areas, through programmes that support their enrolment and retention in schools;

(b) Providing adult women with training and non-formal education related to their work to help compensate for past lack of educational opportunity;

(c) Changing laws and regulations to give women equal access to productive resources and gainful employment, including, especially for poor rural women, land and credit;

(d) Ensuring that new employment opportunities are designed to meet both need for income and performance of family responsibilities;

(e) Increasing access for women, especially in rural areas, to land and credit in their own right;

(f) Promoting community and public services that would allow women and men, especially heads of single-parent households, to accommodate their need to earn income with the need to maintain the family, including, especially, child and dependent care;

(g) Encouraging the development of organizations of women, at the community level, that can help empower poor women.

86. Eradicating poverty means ensuring that women can be productively employed on equal terms. The growing incidence of the globalization of markets, production and finance, technological transformation, economic restructuring, transition to market economies, and changes in work organizations and production processes, as well as demographic trends, will continue to create opportunities and risks for women workers. They pose new challenges for their social protection, working conditions, appropriate legislative framework and enforcement and active labour-market policies. They provide challenges to the roles of Governments, employers, the trade unions and the other relevant institutions and actors at the national, regional and international levels in the promotion of gender equality in the world of work.

87. An integrated approach to employment could involve a number of actions, such as:

(a) Creating a legislative framework that enables equal participation, including reforms of labour codes, so that men and women are treated equally and all appropriate economic activity is covered;

(b) Taking steps to enforce equality norms by establishing institutions to supervise conditions in both the public and the private sectors, to provide accessible recourse to individuals and to ensure certain sanctions for violation of norms;

(c) Providing training and retraining to women workers to facilitate their skill acquisition and upgrade their skills, especially for workers in sectors undergoing structural change;

(d) Addressing occupational stereotyping through the educational and training systems in schools, enterprises, unions and the media;

(e) Taking steps to ensure that jobs are classified and remunerated according to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, including appropriate legislation;

(f) Establishing the norm that family responsibility should be shared by men and women alike and should be supported by public and private institutions, creating "family friendly" societies;

(g) Creating public services and encouraging private provision of child and dependent care as part of the work environment;

(h) Studying new methods of permitting men and women to mesh careers with family commitment through flexible work schedules, location and the possibility of part-time work with associated social security benefits;

(i) Taking steps to address the occupational health and safety of women reflected in unsafe work environments and sexual harassment;

(j) Providing training and access to resources for self-employment and entrepreneurship;

(k) Encouraging the development of the participation of women at all levels in existing organizations such as trade unions and other workers' and employers' organizations, and formation of new organizations, especially of those in atypical jobs;

(l) Implementing affirmative action programmes in those areas where there are present day consequences of past discrimination, especially in terms of access to decision-making;

(m) Increasing the amount of research and data collection on gender factors in employment.

88. To achieve these ends, a variety of actors must be involved. The Government has a responsibility to be a model employer, but, more important, it has the role of promoting the kinds of public laws and policies that will help

provide a more gender-responsive world of work but will not inhibit the efficiency of the market. Employers and trade unions have the responsibility, through collective bargaining, to ensure that employment practices provide an environment in which women and men can reconcile productive and reproductive roles. Non-governmental organizations and national women's machineries can provide support to the promotion of equality between men and women through supporting innovative programmes and monitoring developments.

89. Policies may have to take into account several major trends that pose new challenges for women in the world of work. The changing nature of the formal sector in the light of global economic restructuring will make growing demands on women to adjust to new opportunities as national economies shift in emphasis to greater competitiveness and efficiency. In central and eastern Europe, the shift from a public, full-employment economy to a privatized economy makes particular demands on women to break into new market-oriented occupations. The retrenchment of the public sector, with the unemployment of many who used to work in that sector, requires adjustment.

90. A second trend is the emergence of an intermediate sector between the formal sector of large enterprises and the increasingly crowded informal sector. This sector, made up of small and medium-sized enterprises, provides opportunities for women if they can obtain the skills, experience, financing and networking necessary to make them profitable.

91. A third trend is the growth of the informal sector itself, blurring the lines between the household and the enterprise with the growth of subcontracting, home-based work and self-employment. This will require a form of regulation and social protection if the growth is not to be accompanied by exploitation.

92. A final trend is the growth in flexibility and deregulation in the economy, which, on the positive side, can provide better opportunities to balance productive and reproductive roles but which, on the negative side, could lead to a lack of social protection as well as a lessened quality and security of employment. Which side prevails will depend on the policies and practices adopted.

93. Finally, unless policies and programmes are implemented to increase the participation of women in economic decision-making, the opportunities to address poverty and improve the world of work are unlikely to be translated into reality. Particular responsibility for creation of opportunities rests with the public sector, which could consider a range of actions, such as:

(a) Ensuring that appropriate third-level education opportunities are open to both women and men to equip them for managerial and entrepreneurial careers;

(b) Implementing and enforcing legislation on equal employment opportunities, including preventing sexual harassment;

(c) Encouraging private sector bodies to accelerate the move of women to executive positions through monitoring, information dissemination and establishment of voluntary norms;

(d) Furthering networking among women executives, including sharing of information on developments and opportunities;

(e) Promoting the establishment of gender-neutral recruitment and promotion policies by corporations, as well as the public sector, through sensitization and models;

(f) Setting up in the public sector and encouraging in the private sector the norm of dual-career managerial couples, including appropriate policies for parental leave, job-sharing and flexible career patterns;

(g) Encouraging more women to undertake entrepreneurship, by developing an integrated approach to expedite financing, technical assistance services, information, training and counselling.

Notes

1/ World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.IV.3).

2/ 1980 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.IV.2).